

For Your Information

March 18, 2011| by Richard D. Land and Talal Y. Eid

Lifting Heavy Hand of Religious Repression

Due to Eritrea's systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), on which we serve as commissioners, has been recommending since 2004 that it be designated a "country of particular concern," or CPC. Since that year, the State Department has followed our recommendation. In 2005, as part of this designation, the U.S. government did more than just "name and shame" - it denied the commercial export to Eritrea of defense articles and services covered by the U.S. Arms Export Act.

Given our concern that today's minerals boom may strengthen tyranny's grip on Eritrea, USCIRF has called on the U.S. government to prohibit any foreign company such as Nevsun from raising capital in the United States or listing its securities there until it ceases all engagement in developing the mineral resources or involving itself with the ventures of a world-class human rights abuser. Mindful of our good neighbors to the north and their commitment to human rights, we urge advocates in the Canadian government, legislature and civil society to join in this fight for religious freedom and related rights in Eritrea.

Let our message be clear: No partnering with Eritrea until it stops abusing religious freedom.

[Click here to view the entire op-ed.](#)

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the

Senate and the House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

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